

TRANSNATIONAL TEACHING TEAMS INDUCTION PROGRAM OUTLINE FOR COURSE / UNIT COORDINATORS

The complex layers of institutional and cross-campus accountability in transnational education have a direct impact on teaching and learning. The model below represents four interrelated operational processes that have critical importance to the effective operations of transnational programs. The model interprets the seven project principles (Refer to Case Study 2: Developing Induction Processes for Transnational Teaching Teams) showing that the two strong threads Communication and Negotiation and Quality in Teaching and Learning underpin both Student Learning and Professional Practice. Each of the four parts is integral to the development and maintenance of a robust transnational teaching team, characterised as a partnership of equals. Successful implementation of transnational teaching team processes will contribute to ongoing learning for team members and enhanced opportunities for students' achievement of consistent learning outcomes that span partnership and delivery models and cultures.

Principles underpinning effective professional development

Transnational Teaching Teams are sites of rich professional learning when they are supported by professional development that is based on sound principles. Leask's (2005) research findings informed the development of the seven principles by the project team. These principles provide a solid underlying basis for professional development.

Professional development for Transnational Teaching Teams:

- Principle 1 — is practice-based
- Principle 2 — builds trust and a sense of belonging
- Principle 3 — involves all members of the teaching team
- Principle 4 — addresses the intercultural nature of transnational teaching

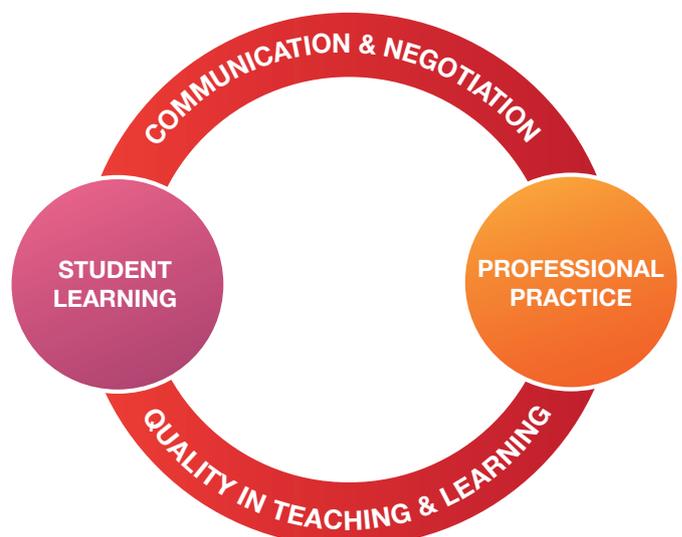
Principle 5 — harnesses the diversity of the teaching team

Principle 6 — promotes distributed leadership

Principle 7 — is flexible and context-sensitive.

Research has shown that offshore teachers need particular skills, knowledge and personal attributes in order to be successful in this complex and demanding intercultural environment. It is widely recognised that academic staff have different needs and opportunities at different times during their experience. This is true regardless of the context in which they teach. The offshore teaching environment is, however, a particular context that requires specific training and development and it is necessary to take a strategic and planned approach to the recruitment, as well as to the development of these staff. Their development needs to be incremental and integrated into their overall professional development and it needs to take account of the dynamic social, educational and professional contexts within which they work (Leask, 2005, p.34)

Functions of Effective Transnational Teams



Communication and Negotiation for Transnational Teaching Teams

Communication may be the most important aspect of the development and maintenance of effective and collegial transnational teaching teams, enabling a sense of belonging, the appreciation of difference and the quick resolution of challenges.

"For me, the most important issues are communication, collaboration and inputs".

"So you would hope or almost hope that they're teaching it differently, otherwise you'd just make a video and send it to everyone".

"I think the collaboration with Melbourne is working well. We're discussing the subjects and they're open to any changes that we do here in Vietnam. They embrace our suggestions".

Objective	Learning Outcome
Communicate across campuses	Define and share expectations of communication processes for your transnational teaching team Identify ways to facilitate a cooperative relationship between transnational course coordinators Ensure that communication takes into account all academic calendars and time zones
Participate in effective course/unit management teams	Negotiate frequency, technology and content of transnational communications with your team Discuss and endorse changes to the course/unit before each semester Recommend, implement review and evaluate changes to curriculum design and delivery

Professional Practice for Transnational Teaching Teams

While transnational teaching teams are supported by the same high level policies and procedures it is important to recognize that the local, day to day concerns of teachers and challenges associated with geographical distance may detract from the development and maintenance of supportive professional practices.

“... in terms of professional development for the staff my opinion is to find out what they really care about, what they really want to pursue and then try to find out how can you help them to have opportunities to learn more”.

“My advice to anybody who came to me in my role as a course leader, I would just say, ‘if you think you’ve got a good team listen to them. ...let them tell you what they think”.

Objective	Learning Outcome
Establish role of course/unit coordinator in a transnational teaching team	<p>Identify and articulate institutional policies, procedures and guidelines that frame and support learning and teaching</p> <p>Use this knowledge to effectively collaborate on assessment and course content with your transnational colleagues</p>
Build a strong transnational teaching team	<p>Develop and maintain an effective transnational teaching team</p> <p>Identify cultural nuances that may impact on your transnational team dynamics</p> <p>Contribute to a supportive learning and teaching culture in your transnational teaching team</p>
Incorporate academic calendars into team activity	<p>Design a calendar that contains relevant dates</p> <p>Establish timeframes and other constraints associated with all offerings of your course</p> <p>Ensure that your transnational course team activities accommodate all academic calendars</p> <p>Familiarise yourself with the teaching models used in all offerings of your course</p>

Student Learning for Transnational Teaching Teams

Having a consistent curriculum that ensures the achievement of defined standards and learning outcomes across various course/unit offerings requires the development of mutual understanding of pedagogical practices in all locations and recognition of the need for adaptation of course/unit content in response to different cultural contexts. Working with an understanding of these differences will support meaningful learning experiences which are individually and socially constructed based on students' own life experience.

"I think the contextualisation's very very important. You can have transnational team members teaching the same course, but they're very likely teaching it differently".

"For me, I think the way that we're doing it now works well and there's enough freedom for us to contextualise and to try some new things, but at the same time we know that there are certain standards and guidelines".

"I usually customise the material from Melbourne... considerable customisation. I do that for the team, so they can use the material quite differently in Melbourne and Vietnam".

Objective	Learning Outcome
Critically review your course/unit guide	<p>Review/redevelop course guides to ensure alignment with relevant program guides, in order to effectively communicate to students in all locations course requirements and assessment tasks</p> <p>Align course-level outcomes with lesson- and topic-level learning outcomes</p>
Develop a transnational curriculum	<p>Contextualise and customise teaching activities to ensure equivalence and comparability of academic standards across campuses</p> <p>Embed inclusive teaching approaches</p> <p>Engage students in transnational activities</p> <p>Review teaching material, activities and assessment tasks to ensure relevance to student cohort/s</p>

Quality in Teaching and Learning

To maintain a quality learning experience for students at all locations requires the coordinator, in collaboration with their teaching team onshore and offshore, to actively drive and manage the process involved. Aspects of quality in teaching and learning for course/unit review that require regular consideration and accountability include: assessment tasks, learning activities, internationalisation strategies, learning resources and operational aspects of course/unit delivery. These key aspects of the course/unit coordinator's role are essential for supporting a positive student experience, and to ensure that the course/unit complies with both institutional and government regulatory requirements for learning and teaching quality.

"My definition of high quality is being equivalent and consistent with all the learning outcomes as well as, of course, following the course guide".

"In terms of the course itself, my biggest challenge is not to become complacent and say "Okay, look at the good teaching scores, it's all good just leave it alone." You can still say, "Okay, it's good but how can we make it better"?"

"Every semester after we finish marking we all gather in one room. We encourage the lecturers to come so that they can see what's happening between the two sites. It is easy to finalise the marks, but we take advantage of that meeting as an opportunity to build up the relationship".

Objective	Learning Outcome
Evaluate your course/unit against benchmarks and standards	<p>Consult with your transnational team to identify data and feedback about your course (eg student course surveys, student staff consultative committees, grade distributions)</p> <p>Where appropriate, share information about criteria associated with external accreditations.</p> <p>Identify and share strategies to enhance the student experience in your location</p> <p>Implement improvements after consultation</p>



For further details please contact

Dr Cathy Hall

College of Business

RMIT University

Email: cathy.hall.vandenelsen@gmail.com

Casey Scholz

Learning and Teaching Unit

RMIT International University Vietnam

Email: casey.scholz@rmit.edu.vn

Support for this resource has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

